



families for children  
adoption

**ADOPTION INFORMATION  
PACK**

## A Warm Welcome from Families for Children

At Families for Children we understand that the decision to adopt is often a difficult one. In requesting our information pack you have taken the first steps in learning if adoption is right for you, and how Families for Children can support you.

Families for Children are an independent adoption agency, specialising in adoption, and we are here for you from those early stages to placement and beyond. We urge you to find out as much as you can about adoption from all resources available.

We welcome enquires from anyone who is considering adoption and we can reassure you about some of the common myths and talk about the process and its possibilities for you.

All kinds of people can adopt regardless of marital status, disability, gender, religion or sexual orientation. It doesn't matter if you own your own home or whether you have had children or not. We are just asking for you to be able to provide a safe, stable and loving home for one of these many children, so please at any point do not hesitate to call us on 01364 645480 to talk to one of our trained workers.

Families for Children has achieved an 'outstanding' Ofsted rating for the last 7 years and works closely with local authorities across the UK to prepare, assess, match and support you and your children.

Our adopters often say they chose us because of the recognition that adoption is a lifelong commitment and we offer support or signpost adopters, throughout the adoption process and beyond. Our Adoption Support services offer day-to-day support for our adopters through to bespoke training and developmental therapeutic support for our families.

This adoption pack outlines the process with examples of children waiting to be adopted as well as a range of information about what makes a good adopter and some of the myths that surround adoption. We also hold regular information sessions where a social worker and adopter are often available to answer specific questions you may have. Please see our website for session details.

Families for Children are looking for a range of adopters from varying backgrounds. Age, ethnicity, faith, marital status or sexual orientation are not what determine if you will make a good adoptive parent. Rather, we are looking for parents who can offer flexibility, be open to developmental therapeutic parenting ideas, can offer a child-centred approach to parenting, as well as offering, stability, love and security to a child.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Ruth Marriott, CEO

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# Families for Children

## Who are Families for Children?

***“At Families for Children we believe that the best place for a child to grow is with their birth families. However where this is not possible we endeavour to find new adoptive families who can offer them a stable and loving home.”***

Families for Children is a **specialist adoption agency**. This means that over the last 25 years we have developed in depth expertise and knowledge around **all aspects** of adoption. We are based across Dorset, Devon, Somerset & Cornwall with offices in Dorchester (Dorset), Buckfast, (South Devon), and Filleigh (North Devon). We are well known and highly respected for our exceptional adoption services and the on-going commitment to our families post placement and enjoy a high level of success in our placements.

Families for Children is a Voluntary Adoption Agency and charitable trust. We have placed over 600 children in the last 25 years with new adoptive families in the South West. Families for Children existed for many years as a joint venture operated by the Exeter Diocesan Board for Christian Care and the Plymouth Diocesan Catholic Children's Society. In 2003 the Agency became a separate charity in its own right.

We are pleased to welcome enquiries from all faiths and cultures and as an organisation concerned with the welfare of children, parents and families, our attitudes and practices are shaped by Christian values. We aim to uphold the importance of love, family life and the dignity of each individual.

## Why Choose Us

***“We will always be grateful for what the agency have done, and will probably continue to do, to support our family. We feel incredibly privileged to have been given this chance to have a family life”*** FFC Family

Whilst the process of the adoption assessment will be similar at every agency, at Families for Children we pride ourselves in being able to offer that little extra to ensure your experience is a positive one.

As an agency specialising in adoption, we bring a high level of knowledge and experience to the recruitment, assessment and support of those wishing to adopt. Additionally we have a commitment to finding the right families for children waiting to be adopted across the UK. We are independent of the Local Authorities and Regional Adoption Agencies, so are able to be flexible and responsive to meet your particular needs.

We believe that the right support, in the right place, at the right time is essential to the ongoing support and stability of the child's placement with you, and are able to offer therapeutically trained, skilled help from our team of Adoption Social Workers and Family Support Workers. This involves individualised and skilled intervention with children and young people alongside parents and carers. In addition we facilitate specialist help from psychologists and therapists when it is needed.

## Our Services

We focus on being able to offer a personal and friendly, locally-based service from initial enquiry right through the process and beyond.

Our main services include:

- Recruiting, preparing and assessing prospective adoptive parents
- Finding the right families for children who are waiting to be adopted
- Provision of adoption support
- Independent Birth Relative Service for the families of children being placed for adoption by the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Local Authorities

The work of Families for Children is part funded by Local Authority fees paid for placements made by us for children in their care. Other monies received are from grant making trusts and donations from individuals and companies who are involved with the charity on a number of levels. We have to raise over £400,000 per year to keep our services running.

## Our Team

At Families for Children you can be assured of a warm welcome at all times. We have a dedicated friendly team of Social Workers with a wealth of experience who will be with you every step of the way through the adoption process. The professional services we offer enables us to provide excellent training programmes as well as our commitment to providing support services to our families.

***“Our Social Worker was a tower of strength, always on the end of the phone, visiting, often with calming words of advice” FFC family***

# Your Adoption Experience

## 1. What is Adoption?

There are approximately 2,000 children at any one time in the UK waiting to be adopted (2018). Adoption is a way of providing the security, permanency and love of a new family when it is not possible for a child to remain with his/her birth parents or within the birth family.

Adoption is a legal process which fully transfers Parental Responsibility from the child's birth parents to their adoptive parents. There are other forms of permanence for children, which you may hear of, including Long Term Fostering and Special Guardianship which are slightly different to adoption and do not give full Parental Responsibility for the child. When the child (ren) is settled with the prospective adoptive parent(s) an Adoption Order is granted by a court. Adoption is a lifetime commitment and once an Adoption Order is made it cannot be revoked.

Families for Children place children from across the UK with adoptive families in the South West. If you live outside of the South West details of other agencies can be found at First4Adoption [www.first4adoption.org.uk](http://www.first4adoption.org.uk)

We are not able to assess those wishing to adopt from abroad and would recommend if you are interested in doing this you contact a specialist agency, such as ICA in London who can advise you fully on that process.

## 2. Who are the Children waiting to be adopted?

We place children of all ages from birth to 10 including single children, sibling groups (where brothers and sisters need to be adopted together), children from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and with varying degrees of additional needs.

In the past most of the children adopted were babies who were relinquished by their birth parents, often due to societal and personal pressures. Nowadays the majority of children who have a care plan for adoption have been removed from their birth families by a court process due to them being at risk of significant harm. These children are placed in foster homes on a temporary basis whilst official legal orders are sought, and a permanent new family is found for them by the Local Authority responsible for their care. In order to be able to place a child for adoption they need to have been issued with a Care Order and a Placement Order from the court.

Many of the children we place for adoption are vulnerable and have complex needs resulting from early childhood traumatic experiences, including abuse and neglect. They may have had many moves and been cared for by different people and this will have affected their ability to make secure attachments. Whilst most children will settle down with the security and love offered by adoption, they will always carry some effects of their early experiences which require adopters understanding and management in a meaningful and mindful way.

Parental Responsibility is passed to adopters at the point an Adoption Order is made, which at the earliest can be applied for 10 weeks after the child has been placed, and with the agreement of the placing Local Authority.

### **Early Permanence**

Since 2014 younger children and babies can be placed under **Fostering to Adopt/Fostering For Adoption** regulations (known as F2A or FFA or Early Permanence) where the approved adopter is additionally approved as a foster carer and the child is placed before the Care Proceedings are completed and before a full Care Order is granted by the court for the permanent removal of the child from the birth family.

This means that the baby is placed with its prospective adopters from as early a stage as possible at a very young age, and will not have moves to and from foster placement.

However given that Care Proceedings are still underway, in the fostering part of the placement, adopters will undertake all statutory duties of foster carers, including supporting contact with birth family, and there is always a risk that the court may decide that the child returns to their birth family. This is a process that requires the adopters to be able to see the child returning to birth family as a positive result, and to feel that their time spent with the child has been of enormous value to all parties regardless of ultimate outcome.

If the court decides that the birth family are unable to offer the child a suitable family experience, and a Placement Order is given, then the placement becomes an Adoption Placement under the usual processes. Obviously this is a slightly more complex arrangement and one you will discuss with your assessing Social Worker during the course of your assessment in more detail.

Some Local Authorities in the current climate (November 2018) are placing many of their 0-2yr old children with Adoption Plans under these Fostering to Adopt regulations, so if you are thinking about wanting to adopt a very young child, you may need to spend some time considering whether you would feel able to do so under this F2A process.

## **Priority Children**

Priority Children are those that tend to fall in to three categories:

- (a) Children who are over 4 years old
- (b) Sibling groups
- (c) Children with additional health needs or disabilities.

These children are referred to as “priority children” as they are often the ones who struggle to be chosen over younger, or seemingly less complicated children, and at Families for Children we feel very strongly that they need to be given as fair a chance as any to find their own family. We have always had a very high success rate in finding placements for priority children and so we particularly welcome applications from people willing to consider children who fall within the Priority Children category.

## **3. Who can Adopt?**

There are many myths surrounding adoption.

The truth is anyone over the age of 21 can be considered as a potential adopter, regardless of marital status, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation, income or whether you have parenting experience or not.

Here at Families for Children we believe that there is no such thing as an ‘ideal’ adoptive family and when we are looking for families we are interested in what you can offer to a child and how you can best fulfil their individual needs.

If you are considering adoption? Ask yourself these questions:

- Can you provide love, time and commitment to a child?
- Can you empathise with a child who may never have experienced the security of feeling safe and loved?
- Can you be patient and flexible, and adapt to whatever unique challenges may come from the child’s circumstances?
- Do you have the energy and health to provide a long-term family for a child?
- Are you over 21?

If you believe the answer to all those questions is “yes”, then there is a good chance you could be an adoptive parent.

We are looking for families from a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds who can offer a permanent loving home and a secure environment to a child.

In the section below we will help you understand the criteria used to assess potential adopters.

**Relationship:** You can be assessed regardless of marital status. Married or unmarried couples, single people and couples in civil partnerships can apply to adopt. The stability and permanency of your relationship will be assessed.

**Age:** The only legal age limit in place is that you have to be 21 years old to be considered as an adopter. There is no upper age limit but age is one factor which will be taken into consideration when looking at providing a stable and loving home environment. We have many adopters in their late 40s and early 50s.

**Health:** Parenting, whether you are adopting or have birth children, is both physically and emotionally demanding. Your general health or any disability you may have must still enable you to meet the challenges our children may bring. Your health will be assessed on this basis. Adopters with disabilities are welcomed to be assessed as their experiences often mean they have gained essential skills ideal for parenting, such as strength and determination.

**Sexuality:** We welcome applications from a wide range of people whatever their sexual orientation.

**Religion:** We welcome enquiries from people of any or no religious faith.

**Other Children:** We welcome enquiries from people who have birth children, with parenting experience, such as step-parents, child-minders, foster carers and people with other experiences in caring for children. Whether or not you have had birth children it is a great asset to have had experience of looking after children when applying to adopt. Ideally your youngest child needs to be at least 2, or 3 years older than the child you are hoping to adopt. The adopted child needs to be the youngest in the family.

**Criminal History:** Enhanced DBS (formally CRB) checks will be undertaken during the application process and we use an online process. There is a charge for this of £12.50 per check. Minor offences would not prevent you being approved. Particular offences (such as those against children and for violent behaviour) will be taken very seriously and may prevent you from adopting. The important thing is to discuss anything that will be

highlighted by the check with the Social Worker in advance so any previous offences can be looked at in context.

### **Can I be considered if I have had fertility treatment?**

Many people come to adoption following fertility treatment and there are no hard and fast rules around when is a good time to start the adoption process following IVF and other treatments. Our experience tells us that couples benefit from around 6-12 months gap between finishing fertility treatment and starting the adoption process. This is to enable time to work through the emotional impact of the treatment, and feel robust enough for the next stage. As individual circumstances vary so much – it is of value to talk through your experience with one of our Social Workers, to work out for yourself when would be the best time for you to start the adoption process.

### **What skills will I need to adopt?**

Many children who need adoptive families have experienced some degree of neglect, and/or physical, emotional or sexual abuse from within their birth families. All of these children will have experienced the loss and grief of being separated from their birth families and their past experiences will affect their behaviour and development in a variety of ways. For example, some children will express their feelings through challenging behaviour and aggression, others may become quiet and withdrawn.

These children need lots of extra attention and the love and stability of a new family. However, some may need specialist therapies to help them come to terms with their past.

At Families for Children we are looking for people with a range of skills and backgrounds to offer a loving home to a wide variety of children. These could include:

- People who can communicate with children and see the world through their eyes and who have had some experience with children.
- People who will value and understand a child's past experiences and empathise with their trauma and loss.
- People who are adaptable and emotionally strong.
- People who will learn and seek support.
- People who will commit to a child through childhood and beyond.
- People who are patient, sensitive, flexible, energetic and have a sense of humour!

For further information about who can adopt please visit the FAQ section of our website [www.familiesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.familiesforchildren.org.uk)

## 4. The Adoption Process

Adoption is a life-long commitment. Whilst there are challenges the rewards are huge. Before undertaking the next step through the adoption process you have to ensure that this is right for you, your family and everyone concerned.

The process of assessing and preparing adoptive parents is understandably rigorous and will involve looking at all aspects of your lives. At Families for Children we work closely with you to ensure your adoption experience is a success.

All potential adopters will be assessed in a two stage process with time limits. This is a Government policy and is the same in any adoption agency, be it a voluntary agency, Regional Adoption Agency or Local Authority.

The aims of the assessment process are:

- a) To ensure children will be safe with you
- b) To assess your ability to meet children's needs
- c) To consider the type of child that will be best for you and your family
- d) To prepare you for adoption

The process is as follows:

### **STAGE ONE**

- You make contact with Families for Children and either download the Information Pack or have one emailed to you.
- There will be a range of options in terms of attending an Information Event in your area, these are a great opportunity to meet some of our workers face to face as well as finding out about the process first hand. At some of the events there will be people who have already adopted on hand to give you the benefit of their experience. If you would specifically like to speak with an adoptive parent please let us know and we can arrange for one of our volunteers to give you a call to answer any questions.
- If you are unable to attend any of our Information Events just let us know and we will do our best to ensure you get the opportunity for a home visit.
- Having done your initial information gathering, you may then feel ready for a home visit from one of our Social Workers. These are informal visits, and are again a chance to exchange more information and for you to decide together whether you want to "register your interest" in adopting.

- You can only register your interest with one agency at a time although we do advise that if you want to you should go to Information Events of several agencies, just to make sure you are finding the right one for you.
- If all are agreed that you want to register with Families for Children, a Registration of Interest form (ROI) will be sent for you to complete and return to us.
- Once we receive this we will then let you know within 5 working days if your Registration of Interest has been accepted. If for any reason it isn't accepted we will let you know why.
- When your ROI is accepted, you are officially in Stage One of the process. This is not a FORMAL acceptance of your application, and you will have no recourse to appeal any decisions made in Stage One. This is the checks, references and learning part of the process. Stage One is a two month period which is led by you.
- Checks and references that are carried out include:
  - Personal referees, adult children and former partners where you shared the care of children
  - Local authorities where you have lived for the past 10 years
  - Health visitor check (if you have children under 5), or a school reference
  - Enhanced criminal records check now called the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (you will be responsible for the cost of this, currently £12.50 per person)
  - You will need to have a medical (you will be responsible for the GP's fee)
  - Complete a health and safety checklist, pet questionnaire, a financial form, a chronology, support network map and a family tree
  - If you have lived abroad for over 4 months at any period in your adult life, you may need to provide an Overseas' police check, or certificate of good conduct which you will need to arrange and pay for yourself
  - If you have ever served in the armed forces, then a check is made with the relevant services

### **Social Media and Internet Checks**

As part of the assessment process FFC will routinely undertake social media and internet checks that will initially consist of using search engines and social media platforms. Checks will only be in relation to public space on the internet and you will not normally be asked to provide any passwords to private spaces. If information emerges from this check this will be discussed with you to seek your views before making any judgement about your suitability to adopt. The only exception to this will be in cases where safeguarding matters arise in which case child protection procedures would apply. The nature of the checks and their outcome will be recorded and made available within the assessment report and advice given about future use of the internet in this light.

## Training

You need to attend a 3 day Preparation Course; these dates will be provided when we send the ROI acceptance and it is mandatory to attend the full 3 days. (This may vary slightly depending on region).

There is an expectation that you will find out as much as you can about adoption and you will have a Social Worker to guide and support you through this process. You will be invited to sign on to the **Adopters' Portal** on our website where you will find useful information to also help you through the process including a workbook to help you think through some of the issues and complexities, with exercises and suggestions for reading and gaining experience. It is expected that you will use this book to enhance your own personal learning alongside the mandatory training offered. If you want to consider **Fostering to Adopt/Early Permanence** there is an additional workbook which can be used in your assessment time.

At the end of **Stage One** your Social Worker will visit you to review progress so far. A decision will be made about whether you can progress to Stage Two or whether there are reasons to take some extra time at this point. An End of Stage One Report is written and shared with FFC Managers who make a decision about formally accepting you onto Stage Two.

## STAGE TWO

Being accepted onto Stage Two means that your application to adopt has been formally accepted and you do now have a right to be heard at panel and request an appeal process should you feel necessary. You will be given an estimated panel date, and confirmation of this will be given as you go through the assessment in case it needs to change for any reason.

Stage two is the more in depth part of the assessment, which will normally be completed in 4 months. Your Social Worker will need to visit you on a regular basis (often weekly) to complete the assessment and to prepare the Prospective Adopters Report (PAR) and you as prospective adopters need to be able to be available for these sessions. Please note that we cannot do ALL the sessions in evenings and we do not work weekends. So it is important that you are able to make yourself available for day time sessions as much as is feasible.

There will be an expectation that couples will have individual and joint sessions, and that homework tasks will be undertaken as requested. You and your allocated worker will plan the assessment visits at mutually convenient times at the start of Stage Two so

timescales should be clear from the outset. During Stage Two, as part of your assessment you will also be required to attend a one-day Preparing for Placement training course.

It may be that during the course of the assessment you need to take a break for a reason, maybe losing a job, moving house or experiencing a bereavement, or the Social Worker may feel that due to issues coming up in the assessment you might benefit from some time maybe having some counselling, or you may need to gain additional child care experience. All of these are not uncommon, and any request for changes or delays will be discussed with you fully.

### **Panel Approval**

Once your assessment has been completed your Prospective Adopter's Report (PAR) will be considered by the Adoption Panel. The Families for Children Panel is made up of a number of individuals from varying backgrounds who have different life experiences. Some are professionals in health, education or other Social Work agencies, others are adopters themselves or adopted people. The Chair is independent of the agency.

The Panel will consider the report, including all the checks and references. You will be invited to attend the Panel and contribute to part of the discussion and the Panel will have time to ask you any questions, and you them.

The Adoption Panel will then make a RECOMMENDATION based on all the information they have heard. They can decide to APPROVE you as prospective adopters, to DEFER the decision for additional work or information, or to TURN DOWN your application to be prospective adopters. If the recommendation is either of the latter two you will be given full reasons as to that decision. In all cases our Social Workers do not want to take you to panel if they are not confident in supporting your application – so if they feel that they cannot recommend you to panel, this will be discussed with you well in advance. As mentioned, being in Stage Two confers the right for you to be heard at panel if you wish regardless of the Social Worker viewpoint.

The Panel recommendation is then passed to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) who will make a formal decision on behalf of this agency – the ADM can overturn the recommendation of the panel if they so wish. A formal decision is made within a week of the Panel's recommendation.

### **Matching with a child**

Towards the end of the assessment, the family finding process starts and we work with you to consider children who are waiting to be adopted. All children are placed through their Local Authority. FFC have links all over the UK with Local Authorities who have placed children with us successfully in the past. Being an independent voluntary agency

we are able to be flexible with searching anywhere in UK for your child and not just in the local region.

You may want to subscribe to a number of publications which feature children who are waiting to be adopted such as **Children Who Wait** (Adoption UK). We will send your details to the national **Adoption Register** called **Adoption Match** and also explore other information sources from Local Authorities who have children in their care who need adoptive families. You will also be able to sign up to **Adoption Link**, an online service for adopters and Family Finding Social Workers, where you can upload your profile and photos, and search the children's profiles yourselves and request to be considered for them. When you get to the point of uploading your profile, your Social Worker can help advise on content.

There will be a lot of effort going in to achieving the best possible match for both you and the child. In the matching process we try to ensure that you have all the information that you need about the child, for example you will meet the child's foster carers and other people who know the child.

Your Social Worker will communicate with you whilst making links with Local Authorities, setting up introductions and visits that lead to the day when your child is placed with you. That work will include the task of securing from the placing Local Authority the resources that will underpin the placement of your child as part of the Adoption Support Plan. This may include:

- access to the child's background information
- funding of therapy if that has been assessed as necessary
- access to medical information
- agreement about what type and frequency of contact with the birth family is envisaged
- a plan for the completion of life story work by the Local Authority Social Worker
- financial assistance

You will attend the Local Authority **Matching Panel** for the match to be approved which depending on where the child is from may involve travelling and overnight stays.

There are gradual introductions which often take 10 days - 2 weeks – depending on the needs of the child/ren leading to the child being placed with you. In some Fostering to Adopt placements, these introductory periods may be significantly shorter as the child would be moving to you under temporary fostering regulations.

## Adoption

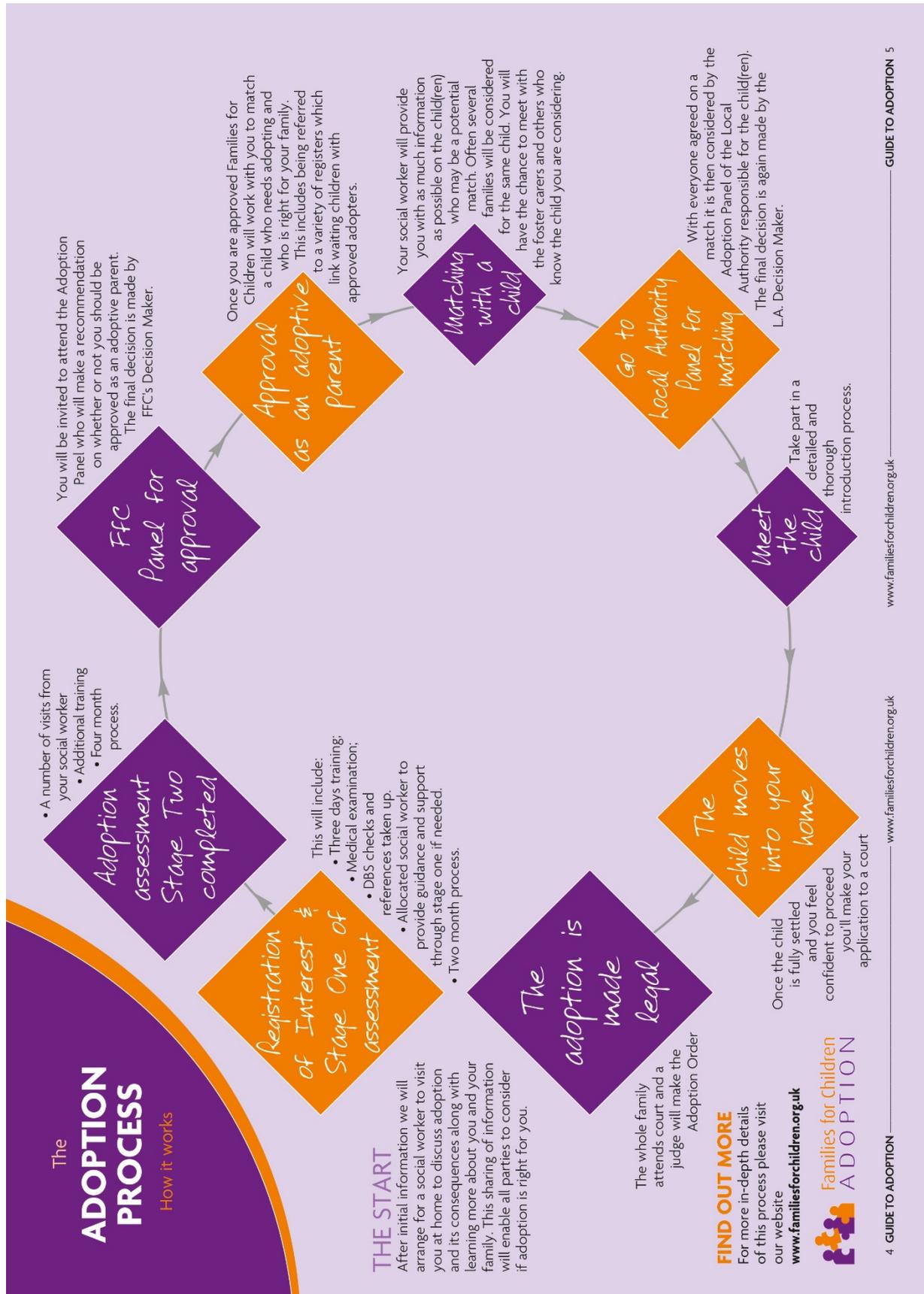
Until the Adoption Order is granted the child remains under the Parental Responsibility of the placing Local Authority and you will need to have statutory reviews at your home. Usually by the point of the second review, agreement can be gathered from the placing authority for you to officially put your application in to court for the Adoption Order. You cannot apply until after 10 weeks of placement at the earliest, and sometimes for a variety of reasons, adopters wait a bit longer before putting in the court paperwork. All of this is done alongside your Social Worker who will guide you on the best way forward and who themselves have to contribute to an official Court Report called an Annex A.

There are two court dates, one is the actual Adoption Order date, which is really the last opportunity for the Birth Family to lodge an appeal, and this hearing is attended by professionals only in the area where the child's care proceedings took place. If for any reason the Adoption Order is not given, you will be told the reasons and timescale before the next hearing. If the Adoption Order is granted, then a date is given for what is called a Celebration Hearing and this is held in a court more local to you if you wish. Birth family are not advised of this date or venue as at this point they no longer have parental responsibility for the child. This is an informal hearing, and the chance to celebrate the child formally coming under the care of their new family. It is a chance to take photos with the judge as a record of the adoption date.

## Contact

There may often be an agreement to send regular updates about the child to the birth family, confidentially, via the child's Local Authority. Information may be sent by the birth family in return, again via the Local Authority. This is often called letterbox contact and is adult to adult communication. On-going advice and support will be available at any time in the future.

Birth family contact is usually indirect via regular updates unless the Court has made specific arrangements for more direct contact for example, where siblings are placed separately. All of these issues will have been discussed with you at the point of linking and matching – although obviously as children's needs change over time, so may the contact arrangements. You will need to be able to be flexible in your thinking around these areas.



# Our Post Placement Support

## 5. Our commitment to you and adoption services

In the initial settling in period your Social Worker retains a key support role. There may be issues of early behavioural difficulties as children react to the enormous changes for them – a different house, a different bedroom, different smells, different food, different clothes and a different school. All of this can be exciting but it can be unsettling and frightening too and all of us have our own ways of dealing with change.

You may feel a bit overwhelmed by what you have taken on. Of course, it's what you have wanted and struggled for but perhaps you never imagined it quite like this. You may well be very tired, short of sleep, short of time for you, short of time with a partner, upset at the state of the house!

Post placement support can mean the allocation of another Families for Children Social Worker or Family Support Worker to work alongside your family finding Social Worker. A family may need support for a birth child, or a previously adopted child – sometimes the child placed, but someone outside the situation to listen can make all the difference.

If your adopted child placed is of school age, you will probably already have done your homework about which school your child should attend. Parental choice in the rural South West can sometimes be pretty limited but your Social Worker can help, if you want them to, to tease out how to prepare schools and help them understand the particular needs of your child. A good school is a vital part of any adoption support plan.

Families for Children are able to provide a commitment of support for our families should they need us. As well as taking you through a successful assessment we can offer specialised skilled help from our adoption support team for families, young people, children and birth children of adoptive parents to ensure the best possible outcomes.

### **What is Adoption Support?**

Adoption support can cover a number of services and here we try to give you some idea of what it means to us.

From the moment when you first pick up the phone, send us an e-mail or turn up for one of our open information sessions, we aim to give you a warm welcome as we know that none of this is easy – so it's not our job to make it harder! Our administration staff are vital members of our team and second to none! Our job is to build partnerships for the long term and the key relationships in those early months and years will be your Social Worker.

## Types of Adoption Support

One of the fundamental challenges for us as an agency is our geography – providing access to services across three counties with eight different local authorities – Bournemouth, Poole, Dorset, Plymouth, Torbay, Devon, Somerset and Cornwall. To add a complication – the Adoption Teams for some of these have joined up as Regional Adoption Agencies. Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Adoption Service is now called Aspire, and the Regional Adoption Agency for Torbay, Devon, Plymouth and Somerset is called Adopt South West. Cornwall is not part of a Regional Adoption Agency.

We also place children from across the UK and the responsibility for the child remains with the placing Local Authority for 3 years post placement when it moves to the Local Authority where they are resident. Any funding for post placement support comes from the responsible authority, and as a Voluntary Agency we will negotiate on your behalf to gain funding for support, whether it's direct from the Local Authority, Regional Adoption Agency or from the Adoption Support Fund.

We can never guarantee equal access to all adoption support services but we do the best we can. We have an established Adoption Support Service which provides a wide range of opportunities from local activities to in-depth therapeutic interventions. Adoption Support Service workers are all additionally trained in appropriate therapeutic work and we have access to many affiliated workers enabling us to create bespoke packages of care depending on the needs of your child and family. The important thing is that whatever the concern, small or large, you let us know as soon as possible so that we can ensure the right level of support at the right time. All details of our support services are on the website or you can call us to discuss what support you need on our main number **01364 645480**.

We also offer a variety of opportunities for adopters and their children to get together and create a mutually supportive network.

**All up to date information on activities in your area will be available on the website.**

## 6. Useful Links/Further Reading

Below are some useful contacts for further information about adoption and the process. For further information please visit our website.

[www.familiesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.familiesforchildren.org.uk)

### **Adoption UK**

A national charity run by and for adopters, providing self-help information, advice, support and training on all aspects of adoption and adoptive parenting.

[www.adoptionuk.org.uk](http://www.adoptionuk.org.uk)

### **CoramBAAF (formerly British Association for Adoption and Fostering)**

This is CoramBAAF's website with lots of information on publications, workshops and reactions to changes in legislation and practice.

[www.coram.org.uk](http://www.coram.org.uk)

### **First4Adoption**

On this website you'll find all sorts of helpful information on the adoption process and what it is like to be an adoptive parent.

[www.first4adoption.org.uk](http://www.first4adoption.org.uk)

### **New Family Social**

The UK network for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) adoptive and foster families.

[www.newfamilysocial.org.uk](http://www.newfamilysocial.org.uk)

### **PAFCA (Practical help for foster carers and adopters)**

This website brings together the expertise of foster carers and adopters with that of professionals to improve the emotional wellbeing, behaviour and mental health of adopted and fostered children.

[www.pafca.co.uk](http://www.pafca.co.uk)

### **The Yellow Kite**

The Yellow Kite is an organisation set up to advocate for a special tribe of children and young people who have been misunderstood and misinterpreted in our schools and communities for too long.

They are better known within our schools as “at risk”, “vulnerable”, “in need”, “looked after”, and “adopted”, but they have one thing in common: they have all experienced significant relational traumas and losses.

<https://ddpnetwork.org/library/yellow-kite/>

### **The Boy’s behaviour**

The boy's behaviour is a blog about an adopted child’s behaviour. It serves as a record to the family about a difficult time in their lives, and as a record of one family's search for help - in the hope that other families might recognise themselves, and have the courage to ask for help too.

[www.theboysbehaviour.co.uk](http://www.theboysbehaviour.co.uk)